

YouTube Video Transcript: World Open to Everyone

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rgfqKNzbVc>

Narrator: *World Open to Everyone* is a place where everyone feels welcomed, needed, and wanted, regardless of abilities, appearances, or intellect. It is a world in which I and my friends want to live.

Mangusheva: Hello, my name is Olya, and I would like you to meet my friends. They have taught me to fight, when I have no strength left, to hope against hope, to be thankful for each and every day I live.

I can walk and talk, but many of my friends can't. Yet, they are some of the most amazing people I know.

Six years ago, I started volunteer work with children with special needs. We met at summer camps, where I was supposed to be their counselor, but turned out to be their student. The friendships that we have developed over the years are very precious to me. I was blessed to share the most priceless moments with them, like riding a horse, or swimming in the river for the first time. The end of camp was always very sad, not only because something fun and extraordinary was over, but also because everyone had to go back to their normal lives; lives in a world that is hostile and exclusive. So in May 2007, I decided to help my special friends discover the world we live in.

World Open to Everyone is a community service project made possible by a grant I was awarded by the International Research & Exchange Board (IREX) and a year living in that world was the most fulfilling of my life.

Thanks to that grant, I organized a club of volunteers, and together with high school and university students, I started taking my special friends on field trips. Never before had these same people been to a park, a movie theater or a museum. Many of them had a lot of fun going shopping for the first time in their lives. And many of them had discovered their talent as we organized Christmas celebration play and even a dance in wheelchairs.

[*Ukrainian song*]

I learned that it's not so difficult to make a difference in someone's life. You just have to be faithful to the calling.

So I want to be faithful. And I dare to dream to become the first Ukrainian occupational therapist and to live in a world open to everyone.